

CITY OF WARDEN
Grant County, Washington
January 1, 1994 Through December 31, 1995

Schedule Of Findings

1. The City Of Warden Should Establish Controls Over Traffic Citations

During our review of the Warden Police Department, we found that the city maintains no numerical accountability over citations or citation books as required by statute.

When we examined the city's citations, we were unable to determine how many citation books had been checked out to officers. We were also unable to determine how many tickets were written during the audit period, because there were gaps in the numerical sequence of issued citations. Not all citations issued were input into the city's computer, and not all citations entered into the computer had a copy of the citation on file.

Citations are to be issued in quadruplicate with copies given to the defendant, the appropriate court, the Department of Licensing, and one copy retained by the local enforcement agency (LEA). When citations are voided, all four copies must be retained and returned to the police chief. During our audit, we found two voided citations on hand that were completely filled out and signed by the defendant. However, the defendant's copy was missing on both citations. When questioned, the chief said he had no knowledge of these voided citations and does not routinely review the citations. We also found that the city does not have an independent review of the citations by a fiscal officer as required by statute.

We attempted to contact the defendants to obtain information about the voided citations, but did not receive any response. We were able to contact the officer who wrote the tickets, and he recalled voiding one of the citations in exchange for information from the defendant. However, he was positive that he did not void the other citation.

RCW 46.64.010 states in part:

The chief administrative officer of every such traffic enforcement agency shall be responsible for the issuance of such books and shall maintain a record of every such book and each citation contained therein issued to individual members of the traffic enforcement agency and shall require and retain a receipt for every book so issued
...

The chief administrative officer of every traffic enforcement agency

shall require the return to him of a copy of every traffic citation issued by an officer under his supervision to an alleged violator of any traffic law or ordinance and of all copies of every traffic citation which has been spoiled or upon which any entry has been made and not issued to an alleged violator . . .

Every record of traffic citations required in this section shall be audited monthly by the appropriate fiscal officer of the government agency to which the traffic enforcement agency is responsible.

We recommend that the police department establish procedures to ensure that all citations are properly tracked and monitored. We also recommend that the city's fiscal office audit all citations monthly as required by statute.